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GLOBAL MECHANISM

REVIEW OF THE REPORT BY THE INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ON ITS COLLABORATION WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER INTERESTED ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Note by the secretariat

1. By its decision 18/COP.2, the Conference of the Parties (COP) invited the International Fund for Agricultural Development to pursue modalities of collaboration between itself and the community of non-governmental organizations, as well as with other interested organizations, including the private sector, and to submit a report to the Conference of the Parties at its third session.

2. The secretariat hereby submits the report received from the International Fund for Agricultural Development1/ for consideration by the COP.

1/ The report is reproduced without formal editing by the Convention secretariat.

SUPPORT OF IFAD TO THE UNCCD, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

CONTENTS

		Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	3
II.	IFAD INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO IN UNCCD TARGET AREAS (ARID, SEMI-ARID, DRY-SUB-HUMID)	4
III.	IFAD's DIRECT SUPPORT TO THE PREPARATION OF NATIONAL, SUBREGIONAL AND REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMMES	12
IV.	STRATEGIC ALLIANCES WITH RELEVANT ORGANIZATIONS	16
V.	THE FUTURE OF IFAD/UNCCD COLLABORATION	18

I. INTRODUCTION

The Conference of the Parties (COP) held its second session in Dakar from 30 November to 11 December 1998. In adopting decision 18/COP.2 on 11 December 1998 (document ICCD/COP(2)/14/Add.1 - p.30), the COP invited IFAD to pursue modalities of collaboration between itself and other interested organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and to submit a report to COP 3 for consideration and to take appropriate actions. In responding to this request, this report contains updated information on IFAD's support to UNCCD implementation both in the interim period and subsequent to the ratification of the Convention, with special reference to collaboration with NGOs. The report is divided into four parts: 1) IFAD investment portfolio in UNCCD target areas (arid, semi-arid, dry-sub-humid); 2) IFAD's direct support to the preparation of national, subregional and regional action programmes; 3) IFAD's strategic alliances with relevant organizations; and 4) the future of IFAD/UNCCD collaboration.

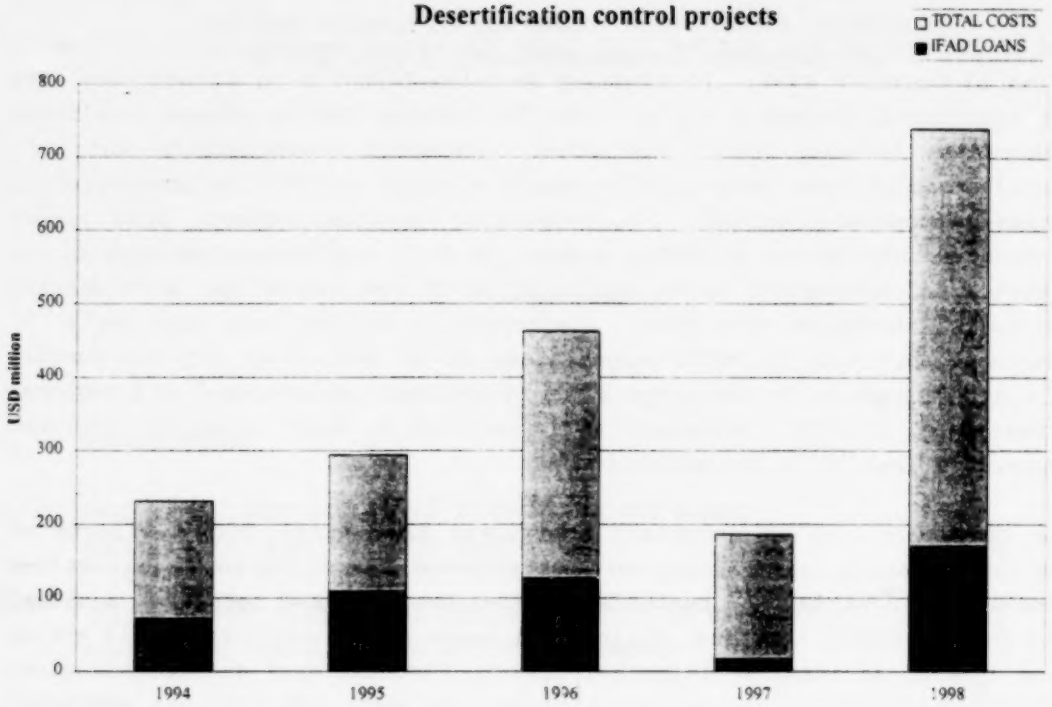
The UNCCD provides an important instrument to enhance IFAD's efforts at promoting food security, alleviating rural poverty and supporting local initiatives in dryland areas in pursuit of sustainable development. IFAD perceives national action programmes (NAPs), regional action programmes (RAPs) and subregional action programmes (SRAPs) as ideal vehicles for policy, institutional and technological adaptation to the needs of dryland populations. As such, the Fund has addressed the following activity areas of the Convention:

- Research and Development (article 17)
- Transfer, acquisition, adaptation and development of technology (article 18)
- Capacity-building, education and public awareness (article 19)
- Financial resources (article 20)
- Financial mechanisms, primarily the housing of the Global Mechanism but also the establishment of national desertification funds including participation of NGOs to ensure the rapid and efficient channeling of financial resources to local level (article 21)

- Regional implementation annex for Africa (annex 1, article 4)
- Strategic planning framework for sustainable development (annex 1, article 6)
- Content of national action programmes (annex 1, article 8)
- Content and preparation of subregional action programmes (annex 1, article 11)
- Content of the regional action programme (annex 1, article 13)

- Regional implementation annex for Asia (annex 2, article 6)

- Regional implementation annex for Latin America and the Caribbean (annex 3)



II. IFAD INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO IN UNCCD TARGET AREAS (ARID, SEMI-ARID, DRY-SUB-HUMID)

Scope and relevance of IFAD's lending programme to UNCCD objectives

IFAD has been investing in areas prone to land degradation (arid, semi-arid and dry-sub-humid zones) long before the establishment of the UNCCD, and which now constitute key UNCCD target areas. Activities have encompassed agricultural production, natural resources conservation and management, and creating alternative livelihoods through, for example, micro-finance and micro-enterprise. There is a strong congruence between UNCCD objectives and the objectives of IFAD, namely poverty alleviation and sustainable development based on innovative partnerships and collective action in dryland areas. The convergence between the people-centered approach advocated by the Convention and IFAD's own emphasis on participatory development at the community and household levels has served as a vehicle for the Fund to promote UNCCD objectives. IFAD's commitment to addressing drought and desertification as a *global problem with local solutions* is demonstrated by its investment in poverty alleviation in drylands, amounting to nearly USD 3 billion and representing an invaluable pool of knowledge.

The diversity of IFAD funding investments for UNCCD implementation, as reflected by loans and grants, including Supplementary Funds, is noteworthy. UNCCD objectives are ingrained in IFAD's lending strategy for Africa, as outlined in the Fund's programme of work since the adoption of the Convention. The objectives are in line with IFAD's recognition that its most direct contribution to combating desertification and the effects of drought is through enabling frameworks at the local level: frameworks that allow dryland populations to take a lead role in combating desertification. Between the adoption of the resolution on urgent action for Africa in June 1994 and the end of 1998, the total cost of approved projects in drylands amounted to USD 1.417.665 million, of which IFAD's contribution was USD 497.067 million.

Countries involved and activity areas

In implementing its programmes in marginal areas, IFAD has worked in the following countries: Senegal, Madagascar, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Ghana, Tanzania, Mali, Tunisia, Sudan, Syria, Egypt, Oman, Brazil, Algeria, Cameroon, Jordan, Belize, Niger.

Activity areas include:

- establishing participatory, self-sustaining development that increases food security, nutritional status, rural income and quality of life. Such activities are based on sustainable agricultural cropping systems that are characterized by a balance between groundwater abstraction and recharge, crop diversification, rangeland stabilization, improved social infrastructure, so as to prevent rural out-migration;

- promoting communal natural resources management in a sustainable and replicable manner. Activities include soil, water, forest cover and biodiversity, with a view to increased resilience to drought and natural disaster;

- disseminating proven, ecologically sound, post-harvest and production technologies, including agro-forestry, to improve soil fertility and productivity per land unit;

- strengthening technical and institutional capacity of beneficiaries to identify their priority needs and to access technology, irrigation services and credit while implementing an exit strategy to ensure project sustainability;

- re-orienting government services from input delivery and subsidy administration toward an educational and advisory role as change agents;

- integrating environmental considerations within the macro-economic context;

- extending the coverage of agricultural research to neglected, isolated, drought-prone, agro-ecological zones that are undergoing significant natural resource degradation, so as to increase the resilience of smallholder farmers in these zones;

- incorporating traditional knowledge into technological innovations; and

- orienting the agricultural extension service toward smallholder farmers through participatory on-farm testing and validation of technologies.

In addition, IFAD has involved NGOs in the following avenues:

- sub-contracting to NGOs of technical activities by the Project Coordination and Monitoring Unit;

- consensus-building and formulation of priorities and strategies in close collaboration with government agencies;

- participation in community-level workshops to formulate development initiatives and activity budgets, based on principal needs and priorities of the beneficiaries;

- mobilization of local resources, provision of technical support services and training of beneficiary institutions; representation in the regional Steering Committee and Regional Associations to oversee programme activities;

- evaluation of long-term impact through annual beneficiary assessments; and

- joint review with public agricultural research entities of the annual performance of agricultural research programmes.

IFAD's non-lending activities

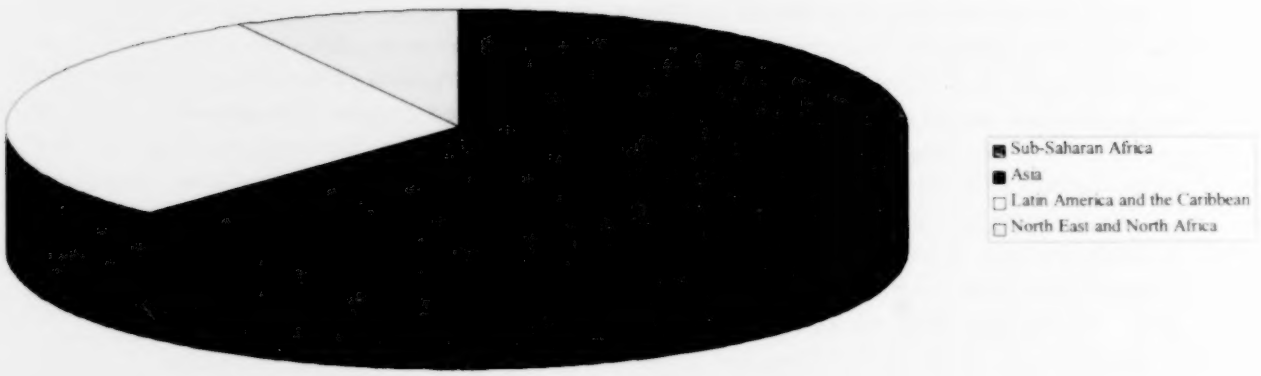
IFAD-NGO Collaboration Mechanisms

The key elements in IFAD's intervention strategy have been: 1) the development of participatory, community-level institutions as the basis of Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) including those for Savings and Credit; 2) community self-management of resources; and 3) community participation in creating and maintaining economic and social infrastructure. Exploring new avenues of collaboration with NGOs, as emphasized by the very Charter establishing IFAD, has been an essential vehicle to further this strategy. Operational experience in

drylands management and desertification control have further highlighted the value of NGOs in terms of their intimate knowledge of local conditions, viz. production systems and coping strategies, and thus in articulating the needs of the target group as well as lobbying for the same with diverse global players.

The Fund arrived at an even firmer conviction that in a "bottom up" approach, NGOs had an essential role to play in : 1) generating awareness among small rural producers and creating local institutions comprised of them to promote the sustainable livelihood of communities; and 2) establishing a participatory focus and a high credibility in its own anti-poverty programmes in dryland areas. As such, collaboration with NGOs and civil society organizations has evolved over three complementary fronts: 1) direct collaboration through sub-contracting in the context of IFAD loan operations in the field; 2) support to their field activities through the IFAD/NGO Extended Cooperation Programme (ECP) and Technical Assistance Grants (TAGs) and; 3) since 1990, at the policy level, the IFAD/NGO Annual Consultations.

NGO Participation in IFAD projects



NGO participation in IFAD projects has grown considerably. As of August 1999, 370 NGOs have been involved, as compared to 173 in 1993 (and not including the development of community-based organizations). Reflecting the Fund's priority treatment of NGOs from the South, 80 percent of all NGO collaborators are from developing countries. The majority of the projects presented to the Executive Board in 1998 related to collaboration with local NGOs.

NGOs, from North and South alike, have been instrumental in the following IFAD project activity areas: socio-economic surveys, group formation and institutional strengthening; farmer training and extension services; managing rural credit delivery; creating small-scale enterprises; natural resources conservation; and knowledge sharing.

ECP Grants and TAGs

To enable their participation - not just as service providers but as equal partners -- in innovative pilot projects in cogent technical areas, a growing number of NGOs receive ECP grants (with a cap of USD 75,000) and TAGs (with no specific ceiling). Under the ECP, the NGO recipient commonly provides IFAD with a replicable means of intervention under similar prevailing conditions. TAGs to NGOs are normally destined for specific areas that are crucial to desertification control: research into sustainable development practices toward rural poverty alleviation and associated training and capacity-building, technology development and dissemination, and regional collaboration.

Since 1987, IFAD has provided 128 NGOs with a grant under the IFAD/NGO ECP to support pilot, innovative activities backing up ongoing or potential projects. The grants have been targeted as follows: 45 percent for new institutional approaches with a view to sustainability; 34 percent for training programmes for both beneficiaries and extension personnel in improved resource management; and 23 percent for testing new technologies for application to the agro-ecological and socio-economic conditions of poor rural producers. The grants have been conceived as providing instruments of intervention for on-going projects; they also lay the groundwork for future IFAD investments. By December 1998, ECP grants to NGOs totaled US$ 8.81 million for 139 projects, 70 percent being destined to southern NGOs (with some NGOs receiving more than one grant).

In the context of UNCCD implementation, IFAD has been engaged in the following activities, through a number of ECP grants and TAGs and in close partnership with the UNCCD secretariat and a coalition of NGOs called the *Réseau international des ONG de lutte contre la désertification* (RIOD Network): 1) awareness generation of desertification, the Convention and the Global Mechanism in the context of community development; 2) policy formulation for development of arid and semi-arid zones; 3) participation of civil society in UNCCD-related national or regional efforts through group formation; 4) training and dissemination of resource management technology; and 5) credit management. IFAD earmarked 30 percent of its ECP specifically for NGO pilot activities in support of the UNCCD and the Global Mechanism.

Some of the main grants disbursed are:

- ECP grant disbursed through the UNCCD secretariat to *Coordinamento delle Organizzazioni Non Governative per la Cooperazione Internazionale allo Sviluppo* (COCIS) to facilitate participation of representatives of NGOs worldwide in the *First Conference of Parties* (COP-I) of the Inter-Governmental Negotiating Committee for the UNCCD.
- ECP grant to *Comité national d'ONGs algériennes du RIOD* for UNCCD follow-up through a project entitled *Strengthening the Capacities of NGOs in the Context of the Preservation of Biodiversity and the Fight against Soil Degradation in Arid and Semi-arid Ecosystems.* It is centered on establishing a pilot farm for extending agro-sylvo-pastoral techniques to arid zones to combat salinization and desertification, paying particular attention to community-based management through training.
- ECP grant to *Caucus Africain des Femmes du RIOD*, Cameroon for awareness generation and women's capacity-building toward planning and implementating unCCD NAPs.
- *Participatory Community Rangeland Management Activities Project* in Jordan involving, among others, training of beneficiaries in sustainable rangeland management and the formation of local Bedouin management committees to promote community responsibility and self-reliance.
- *Community-Initiated Agriculture and Resource Management Project* in Belize, aimed at testing new institutional approaches to natural resources management. The project is: 1) assisting a community-initiated, indigenous group to become a fully operational NGO that will, with the Government, co-manage a national park; and 2) laying the groundwork for the implementation of a much broader resource co-management plan submitted by the community for GEF/World Bank grant funding.
- ECP grant to *Catholic Institute for International Relations* (CIIR) for sustainable community-based health care, complementary to IFAD's *Raymah Area Development Project*.
- *Income Diversification Project* in Tamou County, Niger, enabling the *Association pour le développement des activités rurales* (ADAR) to organize training and sensitization of the population in conserving and protecting an adjacent national park.
- A grant to *Enterprise Works Worldwide Inc.*, Senegal (formerly *Appropriate Technology International*), targeted at testing and applying new technologies for sesame cultivation and processing, and other related income-generating activities.
- *Village Association Support Programme for Rural Women in the Taourirt-Taforalt Region of Eastern Morocco,* seeking to improve food security and the living standards of rural women and their families through training, community organization and appropriate technology (e.g. fuel-saving stoves). It works through the *Near East Foundation* (NEF) and

the *Appropriate Technology Training Centre* (created by NEF), linking up with IFAD's on-going *Rural Development Project for Taourirt-Taforalt*

- ECP grant to *Technologien, Bau- und Wirtschaftstberatung* (TBW) for a *Study for furthering North-South NGO partnership in support of UNCCD implementation.*
- ECP grant to *World Learning* to analyze strategies, methodologies and capacity-building approaches in creating an eight-country *Coalition to Combat Desertification in Africa, Asia and Latin America* (the PVO/NGO/NRMS Project).
- ECP grant to *World Resources Institute* for NGO capacity-building for UNCCD-related policy formulation.
- ECP grant to *Canadian Hunger Foundation* to examine the feasibility of a drought mitigation network linking farmers with research institutions.
- ECP grant to *Earth Action* and *Natural Heritage Institute* for a strengthened Education and Awareness-Raising Campaign in the US regarding the UNCCD.
- TAG to *Developpement Environnement Formation Insertion Sociale (Sahel Defis)* to organize the *Forum of Mediterranean NGOs* to analyze the experience of RIOD Network in combating desertification.
- TAG to *Youth for Action* for organizing the *AFRO-ASIAN Global NGO Forum on South-South and South-North Cooperation* to enable grassroots-level NGOs to assess options for UNCCD implementation at local level.
- TAG to *Solidarité Canada Sahel* for an inventory of traditional techniques in West Africa in addressing drought and desertification.
- TAG to *Comite Nacional pro Defensa de la Fauna y Flora* (CODEFF) and *Natural Heritage Institute* (NHI) to organize a North-South Hemispheric Meeting of NGOs to identify pressing issues and potential partnerships in desertification control in Latin America and the Caribbean.

IFAD's Special Programme for African Countries Affected by Drought and Desertification (SPA) involved NGOs in developing drought-tolerant traditional staples and small-scale water management schemes well before the UNCCD became effective.

Conferences and Consultations

IFAD and its major partners from multilateral institutions, along with a wide spectrum of civil society organizations, organized the Conference on Hunger and Poverty in Brussels in November 1995. The focus of the Conference was the creation of a coalition between formal agencies and civil society organizations to combat hunger and poverty. *The Popular Coalition to Eradicate Hunger and Poverty* resulted from the Conference and comprises IFAD, FAO, the European Commission, the World Bank, World Food Programme (WFP), and regional and sectoral NGOs. The Coalition has accorded high priority to promoting the empowerment of civil society in formulating, implementing and evaluating UNCCD NAPs. It has resolved to cultivate political will and engage in innovative, localized activities in drylands based on

environmental accounting models. In April 1997, IFAD's Executive Board approved a USD 900,000 TAG for the implementation of the Coalition's Programme of Work for 1997/98.

At the policy level, since 1990, IFAD has convened annual consultations with NGOs from North and the South for exchanges of lessons learnt regarding best practices for poverty alleviation. Themes for each consultation are selected by an Advisory Group of NGOs and IFAD staff and have included: 1) capacity-building at the local level; 2) Local Action Development for Sustainable Resource management; and 3) networking cooperation mechanisms with other multilateral organizations. One of the recommendations of the Eighth Consultation held in Rome in October 1997 was strategy development by IFAD for involving NGOs in policy-making toward UNCCD implementation. A new opportunity emerging at IFAD for NGOs to collaborate at the policy level is the development of a year-2000 Rural Poverty Study.

In addition, a large number of NGOs participated in two meetings concerning strategies and technologies to combat desertification: *Land Degradation and Poverty: a Washington Workshop* (1994) and *Rome Symposium* (1995). **During 5-7 June 1996, IFAD and UNCCD secretariat jointly organized in FAO, Rome an *International Forum on Local Area Development Programmes* at FAO Headquarters in Rome to identify modalities of integrating Local Area Development Programmes with National Action Programmes to combat desertification.** It was attended by some 194 experts representing governments, Northern and Southern NGOs, multilateral financial institutions and United Nations agencies. **The Forum launched a major IFAD study entitled *Common Property Resources and the Rural Poor in Sub-Saharan Africa*.**

With civil society organizations and governments having been granted equal status in the COP, in 1997 IFAD mobilized an ECP grant of USD 60,000 for COP-I, aimed at: 1) organizing an NGO Forum to exchange ideas and experiences between NGOs, governmental and intergovernmental agencies; 2) highlighting successful pilot projects and on-going activities of a participatory nature through a Media Outreach Workshop and Media Seminar; and 3) integrating Indigenous Knowledge and the Community Value System into National Action Programmes. NGOs have played a prominent role in NAP development in Burkina Faso and Senegal.

Most recently, IFAD provided a TAG of USD 90,000 for the *Second World Forum of Mayors on Cities and Desertification* (Bonn, 11-12 June 1999) as a sequel to the First Forum (Rome, 3-4 October 1997). NGOs were well represented at this meeting.

Supplementary Funds

IFAD has mobilized Supplementary Funds through Swiss and Italian grant financing. Approved allocations from the two grants amounts to USD 2.358 million.

Under the Swiss grant, as of 16 October 1998, ten individual Supplementary Fund allocations have been approved, amounting to USD 0.668 million. Within these, the largest single allocation went to Burkina Faso for the *Second Phase of the*

National Action Programme for the Implementation of the UNCCD. Swiss grant financing was also provided to the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) to hold a workshop on the use of a RAP as an instrument for rangeland management in Africa. Priority areas of technology and policy, including fodder crop improvement for incorporation into RAPs, were identified. The Swiss grant fund also covered the USD 0.09 million disbursed to the UNCCD secretariat for the *Second African Regional Conference on the Implementation of the UNCCD*, held in Tunis from 2-5 November 1998, affording African countries an opportunity to take stock and lay the groundwork for COP-II.

Under the Italian Grant, three separate allocations were approved, amounting to USD 1.689 million. The largest individual portion went to Chad for a pilot programme to fight drought and desertification in the Kanem area.

The main highlights of IFAD's planned grant programme for 1999 comprise USD 2.5 million as a first tranche to the UNCCD Support Facility (CSF) in the hope of catalyzing voluntary contributions from other sources. The proposed grant for the CSF was approved by the Executive Board as well as the IFAD-COP MOU during COP-II in Dakar.

III. IFAD'S DIRECT SUPPORT TO THE PREPARATION OF NATIONAL, SUBREGIONAL AND REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMMES

IFAD's Economic Policy and Resource Strategy Department is focusing on coalition building between member states to combat desertification through the adoption of long-term drought impact mitigation strategies. An overview of activities initiated by IFAD in support of the UNCCD follows.

National action programmes (NAPs)

IFAD came to the conclusion that its best contribution to the cause of desertification control was to lay the groundwork for replicable programmes and projects at the local level that could be scaled up to a NAP, placing emphasis on the initiatives of the dryland population itself. Under IFAD's annual lending programme, an estimated USD 100 million a year is allocated to investments in projects in countries affected by desertification, and that bear relevance to the NAP objectives. Complying with the recommendation of the Convention, IFAD has mobilized substantial amounts in grant funds for the preparation of NAPs, and is actively supporting selected governments in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean in the same endeavour. It is continuing to mobilize resources from bilateral and multilateral donors.

- In April 1995 IFAD's Executive Board approved a two-year USD 1.15 million TAG, *Programme for Assistance to African Countries in the Implementation of CCD in the Interim Period*. The objectives were to: 1) serve as a catalyst for launching or completing NAPs, RAPs and SRAPs; 2) provide finance for civil society organizations in general and NGOs in particular, which, as

stated in the text of the Convention, are critical to implementation of the same; and 3) provide finance for technology transfer, including the use of indigenous knowledge in affected countries as well as for incorporating dryland research into the International Agricultural Research System agenda.

The TAG was used to finance: a) support to NAPs in terms of mobilizing inter-agency collaboration to the needs of the small farmer, pastoralist and other low-income groups in dryland areas; b) the creation of an enabling environment for NAPs by launching a programme of Participatory Action Research (PAR) to harmonize incentive systems for Natural Resources Management; and c) the assembling of the UNCCD focal points in West and Central African member countries at a workshop to define the orientation framework for the SRAPs. In this context, IFAD allocated USD 37,113 to the Free University of Amsterdam to engage in an issue-oriented review of successful practical experiences in the use of policy instruments in Sub-Saharan Africa. As a sequel to the initial review, it was decided to assess experiences in the use of indirect incentives for sound Natural Resources Management.

- As part of the above programme, TAG Programme commitments of USD 200,000 and USD 39,478 went to Burkina Faso toward the *NAP Formulation Process* and the *Technical Backstopping for NAP*, respectively. The national institution in charge of following up on the INCCD is the Conseil National de Gestion de l'Environnement (CONAGESE). Co-financing in the form of direct support to CONAGESE from bilateral and multilateral sources to the amount of USD 500,000 and USD 30,000 (Swiss Grant) were also obtained for the respective objectives.

  Activities included institutional strengthening of CONAGESE and the elaboration of a NAP through a coherent, genuinely participatory methodology, whereby Local Area Development Programmes, reflecting community needs and aspirations, serve as an important instrument for NAP implementation. Several support missions by an internationally renowned Natural Resources Management specialist were organized at regular intervals. The first National Forum on UNCCD, assembling all stakeholders, was convened in July 1997, and the second in July 1999, making Burkina Faso one of the first countries to effectively prepare and launch the NAP. The process was seen as a sound model for UNCCD implementation.

- Under the same programme, IFAD has been the first donor to support the NAP process in Lesotho through a grant of USD 200,000. It conducted various public awareness campaigns through district-level workshops and village-level seminars toward building the NAP from the grassroots up through district-level activities. IFAD is also providing supplementary funding for technical review of the draft NAP.

- Upon request from the Government of Tanzania for IFAD's assistance in local-level programming for NAP (through pilot activities in selected dryland areas, and based on Participatory Action Research), a total of USD 123,409 was committed under the TAG-CCD Programme.

- IFAD made a TAG for USD 80,000 available to FAO for the *Design of a National Action Programme to Combat Desertification: Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan for the Cauto River Basin, Cuba*. The design of the NAP, in parallel with the implementation of a pilot Soil and Water Management Project for the sustainable development of the Cauto River Basin, contributed to the three-year grant programme's broad objectives: to reclaim degraded land and arrest and prevent desertification. A first draft of the NAP, including a national strategy, a set of country maps and detailed action plans at community and municipality levels, was presented through regional workshops and a national forum in November 1998. A participatory planning process was carried out in the Cauto River Basin, followed by the launching of on-farm technology validation activities in selected pilot areas. In addition, local technicians and producers received training in Geographical Information Systems (GIS). Further support will be provided to the NAP through a second grant.

- For Peru, in November 1997 IFAD approved a TAG of USD 20,000 to co-finance an *International Training Course within the Framework of the UNCCD NAP* with the Dutch Cooperation. The training course focused on scientific progress and experiences in development projects in arid and semi-arid zones, including the knowledge of the population inhabiting dry forest areas. The course, which included lectures and field visits to six areas in the Departments of *Lambayeque* and *Piura*, was attended by a group of 240 technicians, students and peasants' leaders. The institution responsible for the event was the *Algarrobo* Project, which had already been working for five years in the fragile and arid ecosystems of the North Coast area, conserving and productively managing the dry forests.

- In the framework of its cooperation with the Government of Haiti, IFAD provided technical assistance to the Ministry of the Environment for the preparation of the UNCCD NAP. Assistance focused on participatory proposals on methodology, work plans and budgets for preparing the NAP, and the launching of pilot operations in collaboration with peasant communities. In delivering such assistance, progress made with participatory approaches in African countries and lessons learned therefrom were duly noted.

- Italian Trust Fund resources were approved in September 1998 to support the Niger National Action Programme in the amount of US$ 400,000, while US$ 200,000 was allocated to Cape Verde.

Subregional Action Programmes (SRAPs) and CGIAR Centers

In support of Subregional or Regional level organizations under its Regular TAG Programme, IFAD has committed USD 8.4 million toward the development of Environmentally Sustainable Technologies to increase incomes of the target group. They include *Improving Adaptability of Promising Agroforestry Technologies in the Sahel*, jointly with the International Centre for Research on Agroforestry (ICRAF), and *Strategies for In-Situ Conservation and Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources in Desert-Prone Areas of Africa*, in collaboration with the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI).

The Permanent Inter-State Committee to Combat Drought and Desertification in the Sahel Region (CILSS) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) were appointed as lead agencies for the SRAP in West and Central Africa. IFAD provided a USD 50,000 grant to bring together the UNCCD focal points in member countries at a SRAP Technical Committee workshop in Accra, Ghana in 1997. The aim was to define the orientation framework for the SRAPs and work toward harmonization of NAPs through cross-fertilization of experiences. Enlisting the participation of farmers' organizations, the meeting elaborated thematic action areas for priority intervention and sought to identify a funding and steering mechanism for SRAPs. Incentive-based policy instruments are being incorporated into SRAP formulation.

Regional Action Programmes (RAPs)

- With IFAD funding of USD 30,000, the First Africa-Latin America-Caribbean Forum on the Implementation of the UNCCD was held in Recife, Brazil in October 1998. The objective of the Forum was to strengthen collaboration and partnership between the desertification-affected countries in the two regions, within the framework of South-South cooperation in UNCCD.

- IFAD, through a USD 44,000 grant, supported the convening of a *Regional Workshop on Networks for the Promotion of Agroforestry and Soil Conservation* in Bamako, Mali, in 1998, organized by the UNCCD secretariat and the International Centre for Research in Agro-Forestry (ICRAF). It also participated in its proceedings.

- In Latin America, numerous IFAD projects are located in environmentally fragile arid and upland zones -- typical UNCCD target areas. IFAD committed itself to facilitating formulation and implementation of the RAP and individual NAPs. As part of the development of the RAP for Latin America and the Caribbean, IFAD contributed USD 85,000 for: the establishment of a UNCCD Regional Information Network; the finalization of a project on benchmarks and indicators for environmental assessment; and the organization of a technical workshop on the RAP in parallel with the UNCCD Fourth Regional Meeting in St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda. Within the context of the training activities in the UNCCD Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Action Plan, IFAD contributed USD 30,000 to co-finance a Fifth Training Course on

Desertification and Sustainable Development. Participants were drawn from 12 Latin American countries. The training programme, backed up by institutional strengthening, placed particular emphasis on guidelines for action for NAPs. It was jointly administered by FAO and UNEP.

- For Asia, IFAD provided a TAG of USD 100,000 for: 1) Preparatory Activities toward the Regional Programme: preparation of the *Regional Expert Group Meeting* in Bangkok, November 1998; 2) the launching of Thematic Programme Networks (TPNs) in China, India and Iran; and 3) the development of the *Tashkent Inter-Regional Action Programme for Central Asia*.

IV. STRATEGIC ALLIANCES WITH RELEVANT ORGANIZATIONS

The first Conference of Parties (COP-I) to the UNCCD, held in Rome from 29 September to 10 October 1997, selected IFAD to house the Global Mechanism (GM) of the Convention. The GM, although having a separate identity within IFAD, is an integral part of the Fund and, working closely with the UNCCD secretariat, comes under the authority of the Conference of Parties. In addition:

- A collaborative institutional arrangement was established between UNDP, IFAD and the World Bank in the form of a Facilitation Committee (FC) to engage in exchange of views and support the CM's work in UNCCD implementation. Its membership has expanded beyond its founding members to include the UNCCD Executive Secretary, the GEF and regional development banks.

- A Memorandum of Understanding has been concluded between IFAD and FAO with the objectives of: 1) enhancing cooperation in assisting countries in UNCCD implementation; and 2) promoting collaborative activities for sustainable dryland development.

- In 1996, IFAD signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), based in Canada, in which both parties agreed to collaborate in the field of land degradation control. Common efforts were to be undertaken in the implementation of the UNCCD, starting with measures for urgent action in Africa, in particular, the preparation of NAPs and RAPs and research on incentive systems for natural resources management.

- Following an agreement in April 1997, IFAD and the World Bank have initiated a joint "accelerated learning" programme with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to assist dryland countries in controlling land degradation, alleviating poverty and pursuing global environmental objectives. The development of a demonstration pipeline of GEF land rehabilitation projects was to pave the way for a strong future GEF role in addressing land degradation in the context of the UNCCD.

Awareness Building and Policy Reflection

The crucial role of awareness generation among the beneficiaries and formulation of appropriate policies on the success of UNCCD-related investments cannot be underestimated.

IFAD has collaborated with the UNCCD interim secretariat and the *Centre for Our Common Future* to produce a simplified version of the Convention entitled *Down to Earth: A Simple Guide to the Convention to Combat Desertification, Why it is Necessary and What is Important and Different About it*. The production and translation cost was shared between IFAD (providing USD 50,000), Swiss Development Cooperation and UNEP.

In observance of the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, a *Symposium on Land Degradation and Poverty* was held in the Chamber of Deputies in Rome on 16 June 1995. The meeting, jointly sponsored by IFAD and the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was attended by policy-level representatives from the Italian Ministry of Environment, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Convention to Combat Desertification (INCD), the World Resources Institute (WRI), FAO, IFAD and the Free University of Amsterdam Center for Development Cooperation Services. The Symposium launched two IFAD-sponsored special studies: *Down to Earth - a Simplified Version of the Convention*; and *Impacts of Male Out-migration on the Workload of Rural Women and its Implications for Resource Conservation* (in collaboration with SOS Sahel).

A Special Programme for Asian Upland Countries

In terms of area, Asia is home to the highest percentage of absolute poor in the world, 65 percent of whom subsist in uplands, hilly and mountainous terrain. In March 1998, IFAD realized that those hardest hit by the Asian Financial Crisis were rural peoples residing in these marginal lands, which often undergo severe land degradation. Having been left outside the pale of development policies and practices, their entire livelihoods and socio-ecological condition are in persistent crisis. They have to contend with the problems inherent to rainfed farming on such low-potential lands.

As a response, in mid-1998, IFAD's Asia and Pacific Division initiated a programme to improve the quality of economic growth. A technical feasibility study of this initiative, prepared by FAO, was deliberated on during a three-day consultation in April 1999 at the Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok. Hosted by the regional IUCN office, the Consultation drew participants from nine Asian countries, regional and international organizations and bilateral agencies. It was aimed at: 1) awareness generation of the proposed initiative among concerned stakeholders; and 2) adaptation of constituent elements to upland community needs. A specific proposal geared to the very poor rural households in upland areas, based on partnership-building between governments, donors and civil society organizations including NGOs, received overwhelming support. The proposal had seven constituent

elements: 1) regenerative agriculture; 2) natural resource management, including biodiversity; 3) diversification of mountain economy; 4) provision of micro-finance services; 5) micro-enterprise development; 6) local institution-building; and 7) local employment creation.

To orient Japanese government officials to IFAD's Special Programme for Asia, a similar one-day Consultation was held in Tokyo on 8 July 1999. Marking the first concrete step to building a constituency in Japan with a view to future partnership-building, the Consultation was attended by 402 people, including Members of Parliament, senior government officials, well-known economists and prominent Japanese journalists. The symposium served as an arena for open discussion on a response strategy for the impact of the Asian Crisis on the Upland Poor. Participants had the opportunity, through tele-conferencing, to directly interview IFAD beneficiaries in East Java, Indonesia about their coping strategies in the Crisis.

V. THE FUTURE OF IFAD/UNCCD COLLABORATION

With the UNCCD target area characterized by concentrated areas of rural poor within both low-income, food-deficit countries and middle-income countries, implementation of the Convention automatically entails mapping out a course for rural poverty alleviation and sustainable agriculture. Cognizant of its importance in serving as an instrument for promoting local initiatives toward sustainable development, IFAD has consistently supported the implementation of the Convention, including the allocation of significant resources. As the Housing Facility for the GM, IFAD has become even more aware of its increased responsibility and commitment to further the goals of the Convention through both technical assistance and resource mobilization.

The harnessing of biotechnology as a long-term tool in the fight against hunger and in poverty alleviation in drylands has still to be explored; NGO partners, functioning as the major brokers between researchers and small holders, could be instrumental in determining its merits.

IFAD has clearly recognized the role of NGOs in the UNCCD process by associating them in programmes it finances through, for instance, the NGO-ECP instrument. As such, it will continue to encourage NGO participation in NAP implementation by: 1) placing emphasis on project proposals relevant to UNCCD objectives under the NGO-ECP instrument; and 2) developing financing coalitions with NGOs, and providing an increased role for rural people's organizations. The theme of desertification is set to remain uppermost on the agenda, in the context of IFAD-NGO collaboration.